

**1 JULY 1996  
Manpower and Organization**

**UNIT DESIGNATIONS**



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**SUMMARY OF REVISIONS**

This revision clarifies procedures and updates responsibilities and approved nomenclatures. A ★ denotes a revision from previous edition.

1. Heritage is an important element in unit prestige, pride, and morale. It, therefore, impacts readiness and operational effectiveness.

2. The Air Force regularly activates and inactivates units as a result of force structure and organizational changes. Throughout this process, we must take care to preserve those units with the richest heritage by keeping them in active status. This may require transferring a unit designation from one location to another.

**3. Priorities.** Use the following priorities to assign unit designations. Give:

- 3.1. First priority to preserving units that trace their heritage to the original (pre-1939) Air Force formations.
- 3.2. Second priority to units with records of unique historical achievements.
- 3.3. Third priority to units which have gained the most years of service, unit decorations, and specific accomplishments.

**4. Responsibilities.** The directive establishes the following responsibilities and authorities:

4.1. The Secretary of the Air Force organizes the Air Force. The Air Staff, under the direction of the Chief of Staff, discharges this responsibility. This includes designating Air Force organizations.

★4.2. The Director of Programs and Evaluation (HQ USAF/PE) maintains, updates, and publishes lists of Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF)-approved unit nomenclatures in attachments to this directive. HQ USAF/PE reviews all proposals to designate Air Force units, certifies compliance with guidelines and, if required, explains any exceptions. HQ USAF/PE sends all proposals to the Chief of Staff for approval.

★4.3. The Air Force Historical Research Agency maintains, updates, and distributes annual master heritage rankings of Air Force wings and mission squadrons based on the priorities in paragraph 3.

4.4. Major commands (MAJCOM) use the approved nomenclature and heritage lists when they propose unit designations. Exceptions may be appropriate, but MAJCOMs must justify them to HQ USAF/PE and explain them in the proposal forwarded to the Chief of Staff.

5. The measure for compliance with this policy is maintained in the Office of the Chief of Staff.

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Supersedes: AFRD 38-5, 16 December 1994.  
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Pages: 8/Distribution: F

## PROCEDURES FOR NAMING AND NUMBERING UNITS

**A1.1. Nomenclature.** Standardize organization titles, when possible. When activating a unit, designate it using the procedures in this attachment.

**A1.2. Guidelines.** Apply the following guidelines when naming a unit:

A1.2.1. Generally, units require a specific organization title or designation made up of a number or name, a “kind” (nomenclature), and a “type” (organizational level) indicator. An example of a numbered unit designation is:

Title: 2nd Bomb Wing  
 Number: 2  
 Unit Kind: Bomb  
 Unit Type: Wing

An example of a named unit designation is:

Title: Ogden Air Logistics Center  
 Name: Ogden  
 Unit Kind: Air Logistics  
 Unit Type: Center

A1.2.2. Unit Number:

A1.2.2.1. A numbered unit is assigned a number of no more than three numerals (for example, 305th Air Mobility Wing).

A1.2.2.2. Do not use Arabic or Roman numerals in designating Numbered Air Forces (e.g., Seventh Air Force).

A1.2.2.3. Use unit numbers as low in sequence as possible.

A1.2.2.4. Reserve numbers 101 through 300 for Air National Guard units.

A1.2.2.5. Do not duplicate wing and independent group numerical designations. In other words, there is only one 388th wing (presently a fighter wing) or one 720th group (presently a special tactics group). Since these numbers are taken, no other 388th or 720th wing or group is authorized. HQ USAF/PE manages active wing designations.

★A1.2.2.6. Give groups and support squadrons the same number as their parent organizations, when possible. If you cannot give groups their parent organization’s number (e.g., due to duplication) do not use a number already assigned to another wing. Assign to these groups or squadrons a number that bears a logical relationship to the parent. When feasible, number duplicate units 7XX or 8XX (where XX is the wing number). For example, duplicate squadrons under the 96th Civil Engineer Group would be the 96th Civil Engineer Squadron and 796th Civil Engineer Squadron.

A1.2.2.7. Do not normally give mission squadrons assigned to groups or wings the same number as their parent organizations. When otherwise convenient, use sequential numbers for mission squadrons within the same wing.

A1.2.2.8. You will not normally redesignate a unit numerically.

★A1.2.2.9. Normally number units subordinate to a Numbered Air Force (NAF) 6XX (where XX is the NAF number).

A1.2.3. Unit Kind:

A1.2.3.1. Assign a unit nomenclature that describes its assigned mission. Do not construct unit titles that restrict another unit with a like mission from using that nomenclature.

A1.2.3.2. Do not designate composite wings or composite independent groups by “kind” designation (for example, 3rd Wing).

A1.2.3.3. Keep unit “kinds” (nomenclature) and type attributes short and simple. Use more specific nomenclature at lower organizational levels, but keep the number of different titles to a minimum.

A1.2.3.4. HQ USAF/PE maintains lists of CSAF-approved unit nomenclatures for use in evaluating proposals to designate Air Force units. Attachments 2 to 4 contain current, approved nomenclature lists for numbered wings, groups, and squadrons. You must get approval from CSAF for any deviations to approved nomenclature (see paragraph A1.2.3.6. and A1.2.4.4.). For available unit “kinds” (nomenclatures) see the Air Force Information Resources Dictionary System (AFI-IRDS). Each unit “kind” has a general description to help in selecting the appropriate nomenclature.

★A1.2.3.4.1. HQ USAF/PE removes nomenclatures from the lists if they are unused through two consecutive updates to AFPD 38-5.

★A1.2.3.4.2. Unit abbreviations are included in the attachments for user convenience. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications and Information (HQ USAF/SC) is the office of primary responsibility for unit abbreviations and issues a complete listing of USAF organization abbreviations in AFDIR 37-135, *Air Force Address Directory*. Submit unit abbreviation change requests to HQ USAF/SC per the instructions in AFDIR 37-135.

A1.2.3.5. AFI 38-101, *Air Force Organization*, Chapter 2, describes unit types.

A1.2.3.6. If an unusual factor such as a special mission suggests a deviation from the standard organization nomenclature, a MAJCOM may request new nomenclature from HQ USAF/PE. Include in these requests the proposed nomenclature (unit

kind), type (level), command to which restricted (if any), and a short definition of the mission implied by the nomenclature. Also include the justification or rationale for the proposed nomenclature. For example:

Proposed Unit Kind: Fighter Training

Proposed Unit Type: Squadron

Command Restriction: None.

Definition: Provides flying training in fighter type aircraft.

Justification: Provide rationale for new nomenclature.

A1.2.4. Procedures for Unit Designation: Units are regularly activated, inactivated, or redesignated for reasons specified in paragraph 2 of this directive. Designation actions will conform to policy criteria outlined in paragraphs 1-4 and procedural criteria documented in this attachment.

A1.2.4.1. Do not designate or redesignate a unit with the exact number, name, and type of another active or inactive unit.

A1.2.4.2. You may use an inactive unit to form a new unit of the same number, name, or similar function. A new unit formed from an inactive unit inherits the lineage and honors of the former unit.

A1.2.4.3. A unit retains its lineage, honors, and history through all activations, inactivations, and redesignations. AFI 84-101, *Historical Products, Services, and Requirements*, describes the effect an organizational action will have on inheriting the lineage, honors, and history of a unit. Upon request, the Air Force Historical Research Agency will provide MAJCOMs with a list of qualified inactive units for possible activation.

A1.2.4.4. MAJCOMs will use approved nomenclature and heritage lists to propose unit designations. Submit these proposals to HQ USAF/PE for evaluation and certification of compliance with procedural guidelines, according to AFI 38-101. If MAJCOMs wish to deviate from the guidelines in this attachment they must provide explicit justification in a request for approval of an organizational variance. HQ USAF/PE sends all proposals to the Chief of Staff for approval.

## ★APPROVED WING TITLES

Title	Abbreviation
Air Base Wing	ABW
Air Control Wing	ACW
Air Mobility Wing	AMW
Air Refueling Wing	ARW
Airlift Wing	AW
Bomb Wing	BW
Engineering Installation Wing	EIW
Fighter Wing	FW
Flying Training Wing	FTW
Intelligence Wing	IW
Medical Wing	MDW
Missile Wing	MW
Reconnaissance Wing	RW
Rescue Wing	RQW
Space Wing	SW
Special Operations Wing	SOW
Support Wing	SPTW
Test Wing	TW
Training Wing	TRW
Wing	WG

## ★APPROVED GROUP TITLES

Title	Abbreviation
Aeromedical Evacuation Group	AEG
Air Base Group	ABG
Air Control Group	ACG
Air Intelligence Group	AIG
Air Mobility Group	AMG
Air Mobility Operations Group	AMOG
Air Mobility Support Group	AMSG
Air Operations Group	AOG
Air Refueling Group	ARG
Air Support Group	ASG
Air Support Operations Group	ASOG
Airlift Group	AG
Bomb Group	BG
Civil Engineer Group	CEG
Combat Communications Group	CCG
Command and Control Evaluation Group	CCEG
Communications Group	CG
Computer Systems Group	CSG
Education Group	EG
Electronic Combat Group	ECG
Engineering Installation Group	EIG
Fighter Group	FG
Flying Training Group	FTG
Group	GP
Intelligence Group	IG
Logistics and Operations Group	LOG
Logistics Group	LG
Materiel Maintenance Group	MMG
Medical Group	MDG
Missile Group	MG
Operations Group	OG
Range Group	RANG
Reconnaissance Group	RG
Recruiting Group	RCG
Regional Support Group	RSG
Rescue Group	RQG
Space Group	SG
Special Operations Group	SOG
Special Tactics Group	STG
Support Group	SPTG
Test and Evaluation Group	TEG
Test Group	TG
Training Group	TRG
Weapons Evaluation Group	WEG

## ★APPROVED SQUADRON TITLES

Title	Abbreviation
Accounting and Finance Squadron	AFS
Aerial Port Squadron	APS
Aerial Targets Squadron	ATS
Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron	AES
Aeromedical Staging Squadron	ASTS
Aerospace Medicine Squadron	AMDS
Air Base Squadron	ABS
Air Communications Squadron	ACOMS
Air Control Squadron	ACS
Air Defense Squadron	ADS
Air Intelligence Squadron	AIS
Air Mobility Communications Squadron	AMCOMS
Air Mobility Control Squadron	AMCS
Air Mobility Maintenance Squadron	AMMS
Air Mobility Operations Squadron	AMOS
Air Mobility Squadron	AMS
Air Mobility Support Squadron	AMSS
Air Operations Squadron	AOS
Air Postal Squadron	AIRPS
Air Refueling Squadron	ARS
Air Reserve Squadron	ARESS
Air Support Operations Squadron	ASOS
Air Support Squadron	ASUS
Airborne Air Control Squadron	AACS
Airborne Command and Control Squadron	ACCS
Aircraft Generation Squadron	AGS
Airlift Control Squadron	ALCS
Airlift Squadron	AS
Bomb Squadron	BS
Civil Engineer Squadron	CES
Combat Camera Squadron	CTCS
Combat Communications Squadron	CBCS
Combat Communications Support Squadron	CBCSS
Combat Control Squadron	CCS
Combat Logistics Support Squadron	CLSS
Combat Operations Squadron	COS
Combat Plans Squadron	CPS
Combat Training Squadron	CTS
Combat Weather Squadron	CWS
Command and Control Squadron	CACS
Communications Squadron	CS
Component Repair Squadron	CRS
Comptroller Squadron	CPTS
Computer Systems Squadron	CSS
Contracting Squadron	CONS
Dental Squadron	DS
Education Squadron	ES

Electronic Combat Squadron	ECS
Electronic Warfare Aggressor Squadron	EWAS
Engineering and Test Squadron	ETS
Engineering Installation Squadron	EIS
Equipment Maintenance Squadron	EMS
Field Investigations Squadron	FIS
Fighter Squadron	FS
Fighter Weapons Squadron	FWS
Flight Test Squadron	FLTS
Flying Training Squadron	FTS
Helicopter Generation Squadron	HGS
Helicopter Squadron	HS
Information Warfare Squadron	IWS
Intelligence Squadron	IS
Intelligence Support Squadron	ISS
Logistics Squadron	LS
Logistics Support Squadron	LSS
Maintenance Squadron	MXS
Materiel Maintenance Squadron	MMS
Materiel Maintenance Support Squadron	MMSS
Materiel Squadron	MATS
Medical Operations Squadron	MDOS
Medical Squadron	MDS
Medical Support Squadron	MDSS
Missile Squadron	MS
Mission Support Squadron	MSS
Mobile Command and Control Squadron	MCCS
Munitions Squadron	MUNS
Munitions Support Squadron	MUNSS
Operations Squadron	OS
Operations Support Squadron	OSS
Physiological Support Squadron	PSPTS
Radar Evaluation Squadron	RADES
Range Control Squadron	RANCS
Range Squadron	RANS
Reconnaissance Squadron	RS
Recruiting Squadron	RCS
RED HORSE Squadron	RHS
Regional Support Squadron	RSS
Rescue Squadron	RQS
Reserve Support Squadron	RSPTS
Security Police Squadron	SPS
Services Squadron	SVS
Space Communications Squadron	SCS
Space Launch Squadron	SLS
Space Operations Squadron	SOPS
Space Squadron	SS
Space Surveillance Squadron	SPSS
Space Warning Squadron	SWS
Special Operations Squadron	SOS
Special Tactics Squadron	STS

Squadron	SQ
Student Squadron	STUS
Supply Squadron	SUPS
Support Squadron	SPTS
Test and Evaluation Squadron	TES
Test Squadron	TS
Test Support Squadron	TSS
Training Squadron	TRS
Training Support Squadron	TRSS
Training Systems Squadron	TRSYS
Transportation Squadron	TRNS
Weather Reconnaissance Squadron	WRS
Weather Squadron	WS